



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Peter McWalters
Commissioner

September 9, 2005

TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: Peter McWalters, Commissioner

SUBJECT: Constitution Day

In 1952, President Harry Truman signed a bill making September 17 Constitution Day to commemorate the signing of the U.S. Constitution in 1787. In 2005, a bill sponsored by Senator Robert C. Byrd (D-WV) changed the name of the holiday to "Constitution Day and Citizenship Day." This law, known as Public Law 108-477, requires all schools and universities that receive federal funds to hold educational programs for their students on Constitution Day. We are celebrating Constitution Day on Friday, September 16.

The guidelines presented by the U.S. Department of Education give teachers and schools the freedom to design Constitution Day programming that will best meet the needs of their students. The study of the U.S. Constitution can and must be an integral part of the learning process, whether through the K-12 social studies curricula or in the study of journalism, administration of justice, political science or current events.

For your information, here is a sampling of Web sites with lessons and information about the Constitution:

Center for Civic Education www.civiced.org
Close Up www.closeup.org
Constitution Rights Foundation www.crf-usa.org
First Amendment Center www.firstamendmentcenter.org
Justice Learning www.justicelearning.org
National Constitution Center www.constitutioncenter
The Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools www.civicmissionofschools.org
The U. S. National Archives www.archives.gov

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